

(Henry) Wadsworth Longfellow House
Portland, Maine
Congressional

HABS No. ME-2

HABS

ME

3-PORT,

8-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

District of Maine

Historic American Buildings Survey

Josiah T. Tubby, District Officer
537 Congress Street, Portland, Maine

"HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW HOUSE"

Portland, Cumberland County, Maine

3 - Feet

Owner

Maine Historical Society
485 Congress Street
Portland, Maine

Date of Erection

1785-1786

Builder

General Peleg Wadsworth

Present Condition

Building is in good condition. The house as originally built, contained two stories with a gabled roof. Third story added in 1815 at which time the roof was changed to the present hip roof.

Number of Stories

Main House-Three Stories

Extension-One Story

Materials of Construction

Foundation-Stone. Floors-Pine. Exterior walls in original building-Flemish bond red brick,-third story-running bond. Interior walls and ceilings-plastered. Roof-metal.

Other Existing Records

"Wadsworth-Longfellow House, Its History and Its Occupants," by Nathan Gould. Sketch plan of house included. Book published by Maine Historical Society in 1915.

Additional Data

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow house in donated to Maine Historical Society in June 1901 by Anne Longfellow Pierce, sister of the poet Longfellow.

The building of the house was probably slow as the brick for the building was brought to Portland by boat from Philadelphia.

Additional Data

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow spent his entire childhood and youth, from the time he was a few months old, until his college days, in this house. Several of his better known poems were written here.

There are four rooms on the first floor of the Longfellow house. Each room contains a fireplace. The rooms are:

- A The living room which was once used as a law office by Stephen Longfellow, father of the poet. The poet, his brother Stephen, George W. Pierce, William Pitt Fessenden, and others studied law in this room.
- B The parlor.
- C The den or dining room. This is the room in which Longfellow wrote "The Rainy Day," and the desk at which he wrote is still standing where he used it. He also wrote part of "Hyperion" there. "The vine" mentioned in the poem "The Rainy Day" still grows and clings to the wall of the house outside the den.
- D The kitchen. In the kitchen is the large fireplace with cooking utensils still in their places when used by the Wadsworth and Longfellow families. Also, there is a built in cupboard which still holds the Longfellow china and pewter. The back stairway leads from a corner of the kitchen to the second floor. See photo.
- E The vestibule and stairway.

The second floor contains four rooms, each room having a fireplace. The rooms are as follows:

- F The north easterly front room was used as a guest room.
- G The front room opposite was used by Zilpha Wadsworth Longfellow, mother of the poet, and the room is known as the "Mother's" room.
- H The room in the rear of the "Mother's" room was Mrs. Pierce's room.
- I The room at the rear of the guest room was the children's room.

On the third floor of the house, there are seven rooms. These were used for sleeping, and there is a storage space and a linen closet on this floor. There are no facilities for heating the rooms on the third floor.

- J This room was Miss Lucia Wadsworth's, (the devoted maiden aunt, who was a second mother to the Longfellow children.)

- K Central front room was used by the brothers and sisters of the poet.
- L This room was the poet's room. It was used by him during his boyhood and always in after years on his visits home.
- M The storage room.
- N The boys' room. This room was occupied at different times by all the Longfellow boys. There stands in this room, a battered and scarred school desk of which one or more of the Longfellow boys had possession.
- O Evidently a spare sleeping room.
- P The linen closet, with spinning wheel used by the poet's great grandmother.

The lettering shown in description of rooms corresponds with the lettering on the drawing sheets made during this survey.

All data given in the above description has been gathered from observation of the Longfellow House and from the book published by the Maine Historical Society which was written by Nathan Gould.

Charles E. Jannell

Approved: *John J. Tobey*
District Officer for Maine

Date *June 29 1936*

Received July 2, 1936 T.T.W.